# Spiritual Parrhesia

## 1AC

#### We begin our discussion with Franz Kafka’s “A Report for an Academy”. Red Peter, an ape who obtained human capacity, gives a report to an academy of scientists in 1917:

Franz Kafka, 1917. “A Report an Academy” translated by Willa and Edwin Muir, Schocken Books Inc. <http://www.kafka.org/index.php?aid=161>

I repeat: there was no attraction for me in imitating human beings; I imitated them because I needed a way out, and for no other reason. And even that triumph of mine did not achieve much. I lost my human voice again at once; it did not come back for months; my aversion for the schnapps bottle returned again with even greater force. But the line I was to follow had in any case been decided, once for all.When I was handed over to my first trainer in Hamburg I soon realized that there were two alternatives before me: the Zoological Gardens or the variety stage. I did not hesitate. I said to myself: do your utmost to get onto the variety stage; the Zoological Gardens means only a new cage; once there, you are done for. And so I learned things, gentlemen. Ah, one learns when one has to; one learns when one needs a way out; one learns at all costs. One stands over oneself with a whip; one flays oneself at the slightest opposition. My ape nature fled out of me, head over heels and away, so that my first teacher was almost himself turned into an ape by it, had soon to give up teaching and was taken away to a mental hospital. Fortunately he was soon let out again. But I used up many teachers, indeed, several teachers at once. As I became more confident of my abilities, as the public took an interest in my progress and my future began to look bright, I engaged teachers for myself, established them in five communicating rooms, and took lessons from them all at once by dint of leaping from one room to the other. That progress of mine! How the rays of knowledge penetrated from all sides into my awakening brain! I do not deny it: I found it exhilarating. But I must also confess: I did not overestimate it, not even then, much less now. With an effort which up till now has never been repeated I managed to reach the cultural level of an average European. In itself that might be nothing to speak of, but it is something insofar as it has helped me out of my cage and opened a special way out for me, the way of humanity. There is an excellent idiom: to fight one's way through the thick of things; that is what I have done, I have fought through the thick of things. There was nothing else for me to do, provided always that freedom was not to be my choice. As I look back over my development and survey what I have achieved so far, I do not complain, but I am not complacent either. With my hands in my trouser pockets, my bottle of wine on the table, I half lie and half sit in my rocking chair and gaze out of the window: if a visitor arrives, I receive him with propriety. My manager sits in the anteroom; when I ring, he comes and listens to what I have to say. Nearly every evening I give a performance, and I have a success that could hardly be increased. When I come home late at night from banquets, from scientific receptions, from social gatherings, there sits waiting for me a half-trained little chimpanzee and I take comfort from her as apes do. By day I cannot bear to see her; for she has the insane look of the bewildered half-broken animal in her eye; no one else sees it, but I do, and I cannot bear it. On the whole, at any rate, I have achieved what I set out to achieve. But do not tell me that it was not worth the trouble. In any case, I am not appealing for any man's verdict, I am only imparting knowledge, I am only making a report. To you also, honored Members of the Academy, I have only made a report.

#### Universities are defined by prestige and elitism, ordering themselves according to arbitrary rankings, grandiose self-perception, and the market economy. “A Report to an Academy” highlights this alienating bureaucracy, which has intimately tied education to the production of exclusionary cultural norms. Red Peter’s transition from savage to academic is a form of cultural death, predicated on a relentless drive for false progress that equates materialist exchange to cultural meaning. This spectacle of technological expertise is imposed upon society by Academia which has become a defining structure of modernity, while masking any critique as “uncultured” and “unaware of tradition”.

Jerry Zaslove, 2012

Zaslove is a professor emeritus at Simon Fraser University and is a Ph.D. in Comparative European Literature. “A Report to an Academy: Some Untimely Meditations Out of Season” English Studies in Canada, Vol 38, No 1, pg 34-37

Subsequent to writing the story, Kafka composed a letter to Red Peter on behalf of the impresario-teacher [below] that is not contained in the published story itself; the impresario-teacher does not get the point of what he has done to Red Peter. The handler feels pity for himself for having been exposed when Red Peter faithfully reports that his handler was later sent to a sanatorium. **Through the nuances of pity and pitilessness the ambiguities of the pitiful state of the academicians are displayed; the ethics of complicity with cultural legitimacy lie at the heart of the relationship of culture and institutions of education** captured by the fear of the loss of Bildung. **The half-domesticated ape performs the politics of resentment that creep into the academy through its pitiful helplessness at how its own institution has become a part of the process of accommodation to market power**. We the readers peer at the ape. It is his askesisin regard to those who captured him that amazes us and warms us to him. He does not join up with market power. Kafka’s parable and Nietzsche can be put side by side: “an unhappy man seeks the counsel and wisdom of a contented beast: Why do you look at me and not speak of your happiness? The beast wants to answer, but says: ‘because I always forget what I wished to say’ ” (Nietzsche 97). The trickster’s parable about the unhappy man who would not believe in the answer anyway always anticipates another question that supersedes the answer of the beast. The unhappy man learns about informed cynicism. He would always anticipate history as the history of the unhappy consciousness. **The ape’s performance acts out the cynicism of the institution. The bad humanism of the askesis of power masks the humanistic virtues rescued from the past. Redemptive notions of progress are masked as the eschatology of cynicism.** The uses and abuses not only of history but of its material manifestation in the cynical impersonality of bureaucratic thinking reveal the equivocal paradise of his former existence, which is lost forever, never to materialize on this side of the fearful Bildungslos institutions.7This leads the ape into thinking about his powerlessness; the unfulfilled power of “not thinking things out” allows him to calmly use his considerable powers of observation in order to study how the observing of others who study himprotects him from jumping into the ocean. He has become an academic. In Peter Sloterdijk’s Critique of Cynical Reason the institutions of reason are characterized metaphorically as the bathtubs in which the old Greek Diogenes bathed in ascetic disdain toward Plato’s academy. The cynical metaphor teaches us, as does Red Peter, how we “subjugate ourselves to the power of exchange.” Exchange is turned into cultural value, which masks how surplus value is used to “play with the lives of their populations” (322–23). When cynicism is also applied to the bureaucratization played out in the cynical art of marketing the university, we must worry about the public’s perception of university rankings. “Stakeholders”: this cynical cliché alludes to mining, but it is about the privatization of public good, and the cliché reveals how the language used by administrators self-satisfiedly transforms research into digital utopias that announce and parade the spectacle of prestige of the universities to the public. As long as prestige and the research culture maintain what defines a university, the faculty will not care about in-built cynicism. Public intellectuals will be tolerated from time to time. When state funding declines and universities hustle money for their programs, such mendicant activity looks bad but it can always be dressed up as “culture” or as “community.” And corporations—particularly giant mining, technology, or business corporations—are welcomed as part of the system of private endowments even as their technical, administrative-bureaucratic operations earn profits and communicate resentful cynicism in the impoverished lands where gold and silver are mined. Kafka wrote that when the leopards are invited into the temple they become part of the system. However, that means that they not only learn to like it there, but they thrive; they are fair game, and their skin and spots are part of the new institutional history. The leopards are part of the prestige game of money and corporate donations.8 Faced with the so-called turn of academic governance in the name of untrammeled academic freedom, the game is to restructure the “corporate” university. In The Last Professors: The Corporate University and the Fate of the Humanities, Frank Donoghue brings a historical and contemporary perspective to his analysis. He shows how tenure is eroded by the dis- employment of younger PhDs and by the demoralization of the inwardly looking, elite intelligentsia—the faculty.9The ideological driving force that moves universities into alignment with the crisis of the economy demands they adjust to the fear of endemic unemployment. The universities cannot separate (or alienate!) the higher education system from the marketplace. Unemployment follows the increased technology and scientific emphasis in education, even as jobs in these fields swing with the pendulum of the technological fix. In this case, what happens to the rights-based principle that education is a civil right? The cynicism goes straight from the top into the teaching profession. The university is the ideology of the present. The ape, Red Peter, becomes a human when he comes to an academic conference and then goes on to his cultural death as part of the plan to domesticate him into the spectacle that is run by the academy. The Menippean irony is furnished to the reader in the name of the masterslave dialectic that tickles our Achilles funny bone. Coming in from the cold of cynicism does not separate spectacle from history, and what historiographical imagination we have left can hardly separate fact, legend, myth, and fiction. The holy grail of that knowledge once embedded in archaic concept of Bildung is lost. The salvation of the critical intelligentsia depends on the consciousness of the apes to reveal the spectacle through the art of cynicism.10

#### Therefore, I affirm parrhesia as a resistance of the limiting of constitutionally protected free speech in public colleges and universities.

#### Structures of domination are predicated on dynamic systems of power which are produced by societal normativity. Subversion is therefore founded not in purely philosophical or political critique, but instead in the practice of producing bodily ethics and actionable methods of liberation. Parrhesia, in contrast to modes of engagement predicated on hierarchical dynamics such as the teacher who espouses tradition, forefronts the singularity of an open, internal, and personal speech. This enables a joyfully cynical questioning from a non-dominant perspective that speaks truth regardless of the powers that be.

Laurence McFalls and Mariella Pandolfi, 2015

McFalls is Professor in the Department of Political Science, Université de Montréal. Pandolfi is Professor in the Department of Anthropology, Université de Montréal. “‘Parrhesia’: the radical destruction of impunity”, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/laurence-mcfalls-mariella-pandolfi/%E2%80%98parrhesia%E2%80%99-radical-destruction-of-impunity>.

At the beginning of his final lecture course, Le courage de la vérité, **Foucault distinguishes between** four **modes of speaking truth** (or modes of veridiction), namely those of the prophet, who is the enigmatic mouthpiece of the future truth of destiny; of the sage, who unwillingly shares his understanding of the foundational, unifying truth of Being; of **the teacher, who is obliged to perpetuate the truth of his technical knowledge; and**, finally, of **the parrhesiaste, who dares to speak the truth about individuals and situations in their ethical singularity. Each mode of veridiction entails particular power relations between interlocutors,** with that between the teacher and student, for example, being most complicit, symbiotic, and cowardly. Indeed Foucault, aspiring to parrhesia, mocks himself for his utter lack of courage. **Contrary to the teacher, who seeks only to reproduce his knowledge and ultimately himself in continuity with a tradition, the parrhesiaste must be willing to risk losing their reputation, their friends and even their life when pronouncing their truth. They must** ultimately **lay their life** entirely **bare**. Through his genealogy of parrhesia in the ancient Greek, Hellenistic, Roman, and early Christian worlds, **Foucault exposes the limits of political action and of philosophical critique as a means to subvert the discourse, practices, and techniques of (bio)power in general and to escape the veridictional cage of the market in particular. Only the ethical and aesthetic self-re-appropriation of the body remains as a possible avenue for a different life**. Parrhesia was originally a political concept from the Periclean golden age of Athenian democracy, namely the right and duty of the citizen to speak freely before the assembly. With Socrates, it became **an apolitical philosophical concern for the well-being of the self** (epimeleia heautou) by way of the Socratic mission of **overcoming the falsehood of opinion through remorseless frank questioning, even at the risk of violating the laws of the city and of condemnation to death**. Whereas Socrates embodied philosophical reason and ethical life practice, after him it is possible to distinguish between philosophical and ethical parreshia, as represented respectively in the Platonic and cynical traditions. **Foucault** pursues the distinction between these two forms of parrhesia. He first explores the dialogues on the death of Socrates. Then, he **turns to the ascetic and ethical elements of parrhesia as pushed to their logical extreme in cynicism. Literally dog-like in his ethos, the cynic, whom Diogenes best personifies, strips his life of all convention, from clothing and manners to knowledge superfluous and survival, in an exemplary performance of parrhesia. The pure cynic represents radical alterity, a constant challenge to a life of conformity, but also a profoundly anti-political and potentially anti-philosophical stance.** This sequence from political parrhesia, to apolitical philosophical parrhesia (Socrates) and then to anti-political, ethical parrhesia (cynicism) is chronological. But more importantly, it is logically inherent to the mode of action within the different types of parrhesiastic relationship. **The political parrhesiaste** daringly **speaks** his truth to their interlocutor(s) **in the name of their common good, and in so doing succumbs to the rhetorical device of flattery­**–the appeal to passions and interests–to arrive at the appearance of agreement**. The philosophical parrhesiaste, adopts a critical, external stance towards politics and seeks a convergence of the logos of their and their interlocutors’ souls, in what Foucault calls a move from the rhetorical to the erotic.** By contrast, **the cynical parrhesiaste does not seek to attain a reasoned convergence of souls, and acts** less to flatter, and more **to performatively provoke his interlocutors**. His mode of interaction is neither rhetorical nor erotic but aesthetic, in Foucault’s sense of **a perpetual subversive practice in an art of living**.

#### The role of the ballot is to vote for the best methodology of ascetic practice.

#### Ethical deliberation is founded in internal spirituality and self-affirmative vitalism. Practices of liberation begin with personal ascetic wills to mutate our anthropologically constitutive structures such as our rituals, praxis, and culture. Investigations of society must begin with developing an internal spiritual framework that propagates externally into transformational practices while deconstructing limiting ones.

* Internal 🡪 External

Tyrus Miller, 2014

Miller is a Professor, Vice Provost, and Dean of Graduate Studies at the University of California Santa Cruz. “PETER SLOTERDIJK’S ANTHROPOTECHNIC AESTHETICS: READING ‘YOU MUST CHANGE YOUR LIFE’”

Peter **Sloterdijk’s** 2009 volume You Must Change Your Life is a **wide-ranging study** ostensibly **addressed** to a problem that has little evident relation to aesthetics, **the “return of religion” in our putatively post-secular time. Sloterdijk will have none of this**; not, however, because like Jürgen Habermas, he seeks to defend the project of an unfinished enlightenment against religion’s renewed claims, but rather for another, seemingly paradoxical reason: **“a return to religion is as impossible as a return of religion—for the simple reason that no ‘religion’ or ‘religions’ exist”** (3). **What instead do exist**, in Sloterdijk’s view, both before and throughout modernity to the present day, **are different regimens of spiritual and psychophysical training “that are more and less capable and worthy of propagation” (3), exercises and practices which have** never vanished**, despite many mutations, and hence which cannot “return.” These** regimens **are composed of bundles of bodily and mental practices by which human beings create for themselves “symbolic immune systems and ritual shells”** (3), **constituents of our basic anthropological constitution through which we regulate our collective and individual intercourse with the world. Particularly important are the** various **“anthropotechnic” means by which human beings train themselves to experience a “vertical tension” occasioning self-transformation and self-transcendence. These techniques of provoking and responding to such vertical tension, as well as their modernization and ramification into new areas of existence,** Sloterdijk argues, **are what call for the greatest attention in our investigation of the present age**—an attention likely to be distracted by spurious “post-secularist” hypotheses either trumpeting or lamenting how “religion,” after two-century-long slump, is at last recovering its lost spiritual productivity. **Sloterdijk**’s analysis is deeply indebted to his reading of Nietzsche on asceticism, though he also **emphatically revises Nietzsche’s negative evaluation in favor of a more affirmative stance towards the shaping, transformative power of ascetic practices**. While Nietzsche, with his overt anti-Christian animus, tended to equate asceticism with a life-denying pathology, **Sloterdijk argues that the real value of Nietzsche’s arguments about asceticism lies in his recognition of their force as operators of self-willed anthropological change**. Thus, he argues— “a large number of the **asceticisms** to which [Nietzsche] referred polemically were precisely not expressions of life-denial and metaphysical servility; it was rather **a matter of heroism in a spiritual disguise**. . . . With this find, Nietzsche stands. . . at the start of the modern, non-spiritualistic ascetologies along with their physio- and psychotechnic annexes, with dietologies and self-referential trainings, and hence all the **forms of self-referential practicing and working on one’s own vital form that I bring together in the term ‘anthropotechnics.'”** (34) In Sloterdijk’s view, however, Nietzsche’s discovery is in turn dependent on a prior objective modernization in the spectrum of asceticisms themselves, which he characterizes under the dual aspect of the “despiritualization of asceticisms” and the “informalization of spirituality.” The former he sees characterized most clearly in **the vast twentieth-century expansion of athletics, sport, exercise, and other forms of physical “training”; the latter is exemplified for him by popular music, which offers spiritual intensities, affects, and experiences on a mass, democratic basis and without a formal spiritual framework, covering “the lives of contemporary individuals with unpredictable flashes of spiritual emergency**” (38).

#### Systems of power are tools that can either be used for good or manipulated for exploitation, as power is not absolute but rather fluid in its nature. Intellectuals have a particularly crucial role to play in terms of the restricting of criticism and history given their position within society. Acting alongside rather than evaluating transcendentally is crucial to critical praxis that can produce effective resistance.

Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, 2004

Foucault was a historian, Deleuze was a philosopher. They didn’t really do much. “Desert Island and Other Texts: 1953-1974” (Desert Islands is a collection of unpublished interviews and texts by Deleuze, the collection was published in 2004, but the work within was written between 1953-1974) p206-209

Michel Foucault: A Maoist told me: "I can see why Sartre is on our side, for what and why he is involved in politics; and you, I can even see why you do it, since you've always considered imprisonment a problem. But Deleuze, really, I don't see it." His question took me totally by surprise, because it's crystal clear to me. Gilles Deleuze: Maybe it's because for us the relationships between theory and praxis are being lived in a new way. On the one hand, praxis used to be conceived as an application of theory, as a consequence; on the other hand, and inversely, praxis was supposed to inspire theory, it was supposed to create a new form of theory. In any case, their relationship took the form of a process of totalization, in one shape or another. Maybe we're asking the question in a new way. For us the relationships between theory and praxis are much more fragmentary and partial. In the first place, a theory is always local, related to a limited domain, though it can be applied in another domain that is more or less distant. The rule of application is never one of resemblance. In the second place, as soon as a theory takes hold in its own domain, it encounters obstacles, walls, collisions, and these impediments create a need for the theory to be relayed by another kind of discourse (it is this other discourse which eventually causes the theory to migrate from one domain to another). Praxis is a network of relays from one theoretical point to another, and theory relays one praxis to another. A theory cannot be developed without encountering a wall, and a praxis is needed to break through. Take yourself, for example, you begin by theoretically analyzing a milieu of imprisonment like the psychiatric asylum of nineteenth-century capitalist society. Then **you discover how necessary it is precisely for those who are imprisoned to speak on their own behalf, for them to become a relay** (or perhaps you were already a relay for them), but these people are prisoners, they're in prison. This was the logic behind your creating the GIP (Group for Information on Prisons): to promote the conditions in which the prisoners themselves could speak.2 It would be totally misguided to say, as the Maoist seemed to be saying, that you were making a move toward praxis by applying your theories. **In your case we find** neither an application, nor a reform program, nor an investigation in the traditional sense. It is something else entirely: **a system of relays in an assemblage, in a multiplicity of bits and pieces both theoretical and practical.** **For us, the intellectual and theorist have ceased to be a subject, a consciousness, that represents or is representative.** And **those involved in political struggle have ceased to be represented**, whether by a party or a union that would in turn claim for itself the right to be their conscience. **Who speaks and who acts? It's always a multiplicity, even in the person that speaks or acts.** We are all groupuscles. **There is no more representation. There is only action, the action of theory, the action of praxis, in the relations of relays and networks.** Michel Foucault: It seems to me that traditionally, an intellectual's political status resulted from two things: 1) the position as an intellectual in bourgeois society, in the system of capitalist production, in the ideology which that system produces or imposes (being exploited, reduced to poverty, being rejected or "cursed," being accused of subversion or immorality, etc.), and 2) intellectual discourse itself, in as much as it revealed a particular truth, uncovering political relationships where none were before perceived. These two forms of becoming politicized were not strangers to one another, but they didn't necessarily coincide either. You had the "cursed" intellectual, and you had the "socialist" intellectual. In certain moments of violent reaction, the powers that be willingly confused these two politicizations with one another—after 1848, after the Commune, after 1940: the intellectual was rejected, persecuted at the very moment when "things" began to appear in their naked "truth," when you were not supposed to discuss the king's new clothes. Since the latest resurgence, however, **intellectuals realize that the masses can do without them and still be knowledgeable: the masses** know perfectly well what's going on, it is perfectly clear to them, they **even know better than the intellectuals do, and they say so convincingly enough. But a system of power exists to bar, prohibit, invalidate their discourse and their knowledge**—a power located not only in the upper echelons of censorship, but which deeply and subtly permeates the whole network of society. **The intellectuals are themselves part of this system of power**, as is the idea that intellectuals are the agents of "consciousness" and discourse. **The role of the intellectual is no longer to situate himself "slightly ahead"** or "slightly to one side" **so he may speak the silent truth of each and all; it is rather to struggle against those forms of power** where he is both instrument and object: in the order of "knowledge," "truth," "consciousness," and "discourse." So it is that theory does not express, translate, or apply a praxis; it is a praxis— but local and regional, as you say: non-totalizing. **A struggle against power, a struggle to bring power to light and open it up wherever it is most invisible and insidious.** Not a struggle for some "insight" or "realization" (for a long time now consciousness as knowledge has been acquired by the masses, and consciousness as subjectivity has been taken, occupied by the bourgeoisie)—but **a struggle to undermine and take power side by side with those who are fighting, and not off to the side trying to enlighten them**. A "theory" is the regional system of this struggle.

# Frontlines

## Extensions

### Case/Impacts

#### [Omitted]

### ROB

#### [Omitted]

## T

### Voter Framing

#### [Omitted]

### Academia DA

#### [Omitted]

### Cultural Death DA

#### [Omitted]

### Trump DA

#### [Omitted]

### CI

#### [Omitted]

### Weigh Case

#### [Omitted]

## T – Any/Nebel

### General

#### I meet – the aff only specifies a particular method - the word “any” only modifies the amount of free speech being restricted – we defend all of it shouldn’t.

### CI

#### “Any” refers to no specific amount.

Google Dictionary, 2016

“any”

**an·y**

ˈenē/

determiner & pronoun

1.

**used to refer to one or some of a thing or number of things, no matter how much or many.**

"I don't have any choice"

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

2.

whichever of a specified class might be chosen.

"these constellations are visible at any hour of the night"

adverb

1.

(used for emphasis) at all; in some degree.

"he wasn't any good at basketball"

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| synonyms: | at all, in the least, to any extent, in/to any degree  "is your father any better?" |

#### Prefer ---

#### [Omitted]

### Nebel

#### [Omitted]

## Truth Testing ROB

### General

#### [Omitted]

## Stuyvesant Habeaus Viscus

### General

#### [Omitted]

### Perm

#### [Omitted]

### Case Solves

#### Parrhesia solves the critique. The incomprehensibility of the Black Vernacular fragments western thought – but it is only possible if we embrace the performative act of speaking – we’re the internal link to complex blackness and forefronting inhuman.

Havis 2009 (Devonya N. Havis – PhD Associate Professor of Philosophy Boston College, “Blackness beyond witness Black Vernacular phenomena and auditory identity”, <http://psc.sagepub.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/content/35/7/747.full.pdf+html> – ERW)

Black Vernacular phenomena mark the an-architechtonic of the play that is beyond witness, beyond w(h)it(e)ness, traced in the sound events that give way to performative, discursive, communities of difference. A crucial feature of Black Vernacular is its capacity to exceed its concept. Hence, Black Vernacular cannot be placed under the rubric of theory qua theory because that would presume a presence, a completion that is never fulfilled. For these reasons, Black Vernacular in its heterogeneity and multivocality may be called phenomena. Let us then talk about Black Vernacular phenomena as a set of strategies – a form of philosophical intervention – that contests fixity, marking the insistence upon grand narratives as a feature of privileging systems. As such, Black Vernacular phenomena mark the polyvalent, multivocal, hybrid theoretical articulations of blackness as the dynamic context of liberatory theory – the realm of doing philosophy. In evoking the notion of ‘doing philosophy’, I want to call attention to philosophy as a practice, or a process of habituation whereby one develops an active critical posture in which theory and action are necessary linked. As bell hooks writes: . . . when our lived experience of theorizing is fundamentally linked to processes of self-recovery, of collective liberation, no gap exists between theory and practice. Indeed, what such experience makes more evident is the bond between the two – that ultimately reciprocal process wherein one enables the other.19 Blackness, then, in the Black Vernacular modality of performative utterance performs a philosophical intervention upon philosophy itself, insisting that philosophy be an active practice – an art of life involving processes of interrogation, invention and celebration. The celebration issues forth in various registers and, in its various modalities, Black Vernacular phenomena can be said to mark an unsettling of such traditional conceptions as the self, liberation, revolution and ethics. These phenomena function in ways that unsettle the western tradition, particularly the philosophical tradition, in what can best be described as the disruption of the primacy given to binary oppositional structures and their attendant systems of hierarchy that give rise to the privileging of one pole of the opposition over the other (that is, good over bad, truth over untruth). Such privileging enables a ‘violent hierarchy’20 that prefigures the impossibility of non-reified notions of self and identity. As an alterity, blackness (Black Vernacular phenomena in the modality of active expression, performative utterances) is beyond the horizons delimited within binary oppositions. ‘Whereas binary logic operates within the limits of an “either . . . or . . .”’, these traces resist binary thinking by holding apparent oppositions simultaneously transforming – not transcending – paradox into ritual sound celebration. The Black Vernacular modality of performative utterance or ritual sound, describes, in so far as possible, the ‘play’ by means of which a ‘performance’ of ‘blackness’ gestures toward that which cannot directly be characterized because it lacks visibility and quantification (from the vantage point of traditional western philosophy). As such, it is only in the non-reified notion of performance that we can trace the impermanence of blackness, the fissures through which it springs forth in every effort to impose limits or permanence. It is this surd, present on the margins, and suggested in the ‘performance’, that transgresses every attempt to establish permanence, limit, truth. This ‘play’, experienced as ‘performance’, is simultaneously an activity of creation, celebration and resistance. In framing our discussion, I posit that these performative utterances ‘talk back’. In so far as blackness lies outside the modern western philosophic/epistemological framework, it functions as a disruption that creates openings for philosophical intervention – the activity ‘talking back’ or engaging parrhesia. There is a relationship between the notion of talking back and the Greek concept parrhesia. In drawing this correlation, my assertion is that both are central to acts of transgression and resistance because they set in motion a practice rather than a hegemonic commitment to liberation and revolution that eventually reinscribe another form of oppressive regime. Hence it is critical that we understand parrhesia as a critical means of engagement rather than a zealous attempt to force others to submit to a particular point of view. As such, parrhesia is different from rhetoric and fundamentalism. It hinges upon active questioning, exploration and critical examination with an interest toward effecting what is just. It is clear then that Black Vernacular phenomena are parrhesiastic in character in so far as these phenomena operate in line with the parrhesiastic game. One who practises parrhesia, like the Black Vernacular community, ‘opens his heart and mind completely to other people through his discourse’.21 Hence, parrhesia marks a particular relationship between the speaker and what is said. The one who practises parrhesia avoids rhetoric that would hide what he thinks and instead ‘acts on other people’s minds by showing them as directly as possible what he actually believes’. Hence, ‘the commitment involved in parrhesia is linked to a certain social situation, to a difference of status between the speaker and the audience, to the fact that the parrhesiastes says something which is dangerous to himself and thus involves risk’. In parrhesia, there is ‘always an exact coincidence between belief and truth. . . . [T]he coincidence between belief and truth does not take place in a (mental) experience, but in a verbal activity, namely parrhesia.’22 While parrhesia involves speaking the truth, its primary function is not simply truth-telling but putting forth a criticism. Hence, the parrhesiastes is not focused on indicating the truth to someone else and/or convincing another of this truth. Instead, the speaker offers a criticism, renders a critique, of himself or another. Such a critique ‘comes from below . . . and is directed towards above’. One in the parrhesiastic attitude ‘risks his privilege to speak freely when he discloses a truth which threatens the majority’.23 He assumes such risk as a matter of moral duty, as obligation because the speaker is not forced to speak and could, in fact, remain silent. The duty assumed in parrhesia involves offering a critique that helps one to recognize what goes unseen where such seeing creates the possibility of correcting what is amiss. As such, there is a relationship, too, between parrhesia, freedom and duty. Foucault writes: . . . parrhesia is a kind of verbal activity where the speaker has a specific relation to truth through frankness, a certain relationship to his own life through danger, a certain type of relation to himself and other people through criticism (self-criticism or criticism of other people), and a specific relation to moral law through freedom and duty. More precisely, parrhesia is a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth, and risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself). In parrhesia, the speaker uses his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, this risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy.24 Blackness in its phenomenal expression as Black Vernacular phenomena can be aligned with philosophy as parrhesiastic expression. In effect, the sound event, the ritual performance of blackness, draws attention to (as Foucault would say) ‘the way institutions, practices, habits, and behavior become a problem for people who behave in specific sorts of ways, who engage in certain types of habit’.25 Moreover, the verbal activity of Black Vernacular phenomena call attention to the way an unproblematic field of experience, or a set of practices which were accepted without question, which were familiar and silent, out of discussion, become a problem, raise discussion and debate, incite new reactions, and induces a crisis in the previously silent behavior, habits, practices, and institutions. The history of thought, understood in this way, is the history of the way people begin to take care of something.26 I would add that the above description is the practice of philosophy and the activity of Black Vernacular phenomena. In fact, we might easily align the Socratic parrhesiastic attitude with Black Vernacular phenomena. Socrates offers philosophical intervention that ‘requires a personal, face to face relationship’. As one of the Platonic dialogues notes, Socrates’ ability to function as a touchstone, to offer philosophical intervention, has credibility because he is ‘musical’. He is someone who lives in a way that allows the speaker and his speech to harmonize with each other. To quote one of the interlocutors: ‘Socrates has tuned himself with the fairest harmony, not that of a lyre or other entertaining instrument, but has made a true concord of his own life between his words and his deeds.’27 This ability to talk back – to simultaneously celebrate in sound and offer philosophical intervention, to critique – is crucial as we develop different strategies to negotiate our ethical and political lives as we do philosophy, because as Foucault writes: Without the right of criticism, the power exercised by a sovereign [read as government, state, etc.] is without limitation. Such power without limitation is . . . characterized as ‘joining fools in their foolishness’. Foe power without limitation is directly related to madness. The man who exercises power is wise only insofar as there exists someone who can use parrhesia to criticize him, thereby putting some limit to his power, to his command.28

### Foucault Link

#### [Omitted]

### Anti-Humanism

#### Anti-humanism is just as problematic as humanism and humanism isn’t always bad – context is always key and narratives of humanity are contingent.

**Lester 12** – (January 2012, Alan, Director of Interdisciplinary Research, Professor of Historical Geography, and Co-Director of the Colonial and Postcolonial Studies Network, University of Sussex, “Humanism, race and the colonial frontier,” Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, Volume 37, Issue 1, pages 132–148)

Anderson argues that

it is not an issue of extending humanity to … negatively racialised people, but of putting into question that from which such people have been excluded – that which, for liberal discourse, remains unproblematised. (2007, 199)

I fear, however, that if we direct attention away from histories of humanism’s failure to deal with difference and to render that difference compatible with its fundamental universalism, and if we overlook its proponents’ failed attempts to combat dispossession, murder and oppression; if our history of race is instead understood through a critique of humanity’s conceptual separation from nature, we dilute the political potency of universalism.

Historically, it was not humanism that gave rise to racial innatism, it was the specifically anti-humanist politics of settlers forging new social assemblages through relations of violence on colonial frontiers. Settler communities became established social assemblages in their own right specifically through the rejection of humanist interventions. Perhaps, as Edward Said suggested, we can learn from the implementation of humanist universalism in practice, and insist on its potential to combat racism, and perhaps we can insist on the contemporary conceptual hybridisation of human–non-human entities too, without necessarily abandoning all the precepts of humanism (Said 2004; Todorov 2002). We do not necessarily need to accord a specific value to the human, separate from and above nature, in order to make a moral and political case for a fundamental human universalism that can be wielded strategically against racial violence.

Nineteenth century humanitarians’ universalism was fundamentally conditioned by their belief that British culture stood at the apex of a hierarchical order of civilisations. From the mid-nineteenth century through to the mid-twentieth century, this ethnocentrism produced what Lyotard describes as ‘the flattening of differences, or the demand for a norm (“human nature”)’, that ‘carries with it its own forms of terror’ (cited Braun 2004, 1352). The intervention of Aboriginal Protection demonstrates that humanist universalism has the potential to inflict such terror (it was the Protectorate of Aborigines Office reincarnated that was responsible, later in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for Aboriginal Australia’s Stolen Generation, and it was the assimilationist vision of the Protectors’ equivalents in Canada that led to the abuses of the Residential Schools system). But we must not forget that humanism’s alternatives, founded upon principles of difference rather than commonality, have the potential to do the same and even worse.

In the nineteenth century, Caribbean planters and then emigrant British settlers emphasised the multiplicity of the human species, the absence of any universal ‘human nature’, the incorrigibility of difference, in their upholding of biological determinism. Their assault on any notion of a fundamental commonality among human beings has disconcerting points of intersection with the radical critique of humanism today. The scientific argument of the nineteenth century that came closest to post-humanism’s insistence on the hybridity of humanity, promising to ‘close the ontological gap between human and non-human animals’ (Day 2008, 49), was the evolutionary theory of biological descent associated with Darwin, and yet this theory was adopted in Aotearoa New Zealand and other colonial sites precisely to legitimate the potential extinction of other, ‘weaker’ races in the face of British colonisation on the grounds of the natural law of a struggle for survival (Stenhouse 1999).

Both the upholding and the rejection of human–nature binaries can thus result in racially oppressive actions, depending on the contingent politics of specific social assemblages. Nineteenth century colonial humanitarians, inspired as they were by an irredeemably ethnocentric and religiously exclusive form of universalism, at least combatted exterminatory settler discourses and practices at multiple sites of empire, and provided spaces on mission and protectorate stations in which indigenous peoples could be shielded to a very limited extent from dispossession and murder. They also, unintentionally, reproduced discourses of a civilising mission and of a universal humanity that could be deployed by anticolonial nationalists in other sites of empire that were never invaded to the same extent by settlers, in independence struggles from the mid-twentieth century. Finally, as Whatmore’s (2002) analysis of the Select Committee on Aborigines reveals, they provided juridical narratives that are part of the arsenal of weapons that indigenous peoples can wield in attempts to claim redress and recompense in a postcolonial world.

The politics of humanism in practice, then, was riddled with contradiction, fraught with particularity and latent with varying possibilities. It could be relatively progressive and liberatory; it could be dispossessive and culturally genocidal. Within its repertoire lay potential to combat environmental and biological determinism and innatism, however, and this should not be forgotten in a rush to condemn humanism’s universalism as well as its anthropocentrism. It is in the tensions within universalism that the ongoing potential of an always provisional, self-conscious, flexible and strategic humanism – one that now recognises the continuity between the human and the non-human as well as the power-laden particularities of the male, middle class, Western human subject – resides.

### Evans

#### Non-black afropess is objectifying and complicit – it’s a performative double turn.

Rashad Evans, 2015

“On Flipping Aff & Being Black”, July 31, http://www.rwesq.com/on-flipping-aff-being-black/

Such was not the case with Black Nihilism. The debaters actually picked this argument up with some ease. Of course, the argument beneath the Nihilism argument is afro-pessimism. This is a super popular debate argument already so I can see how it might be attractive to young debaters. However, I wonder why there was no similar cognitive dissonance for the debaters before arguing in favor of a radical Black argument which principally focuses on white violence and the necessity of a Black revolution. I listened to the debates just as I have listened to many college debates on the argument and it became clear to me that the kids did not get the argument. The argument had been reduced to: it sucks to be the Black body. I consistently hear debaters saying things like “the Back body can never…” “the Black body always…”"…to the Black body.” The is actually a reprieve from those debaters who would sometimes insert slave instead of Black body. In any event, non-Black debaters tend to use the pessimism argument to reduce Black people to a body or slave or simply an object. This is kinda the argument. But, this is the perversity of the argument in the hands of non-black debaters. One important move of afro-pessimism is to focus on anti-blackness as opposed to or in addition to white supremacy. The idea is that the world is anti-black and that anti-blackness is: (1) bigger than individual acts, (2) about more than white people and (3) foundational to humanity and civil society. In other words, all white people are implicated no matter how good or nice they are and so are non-white, non-Black people and no good can come of this world. However, that focus on anti-blackness and what makes the Black experience unique has also become an excuse for non-Black debaters to only focus on how “the Black body” is positioned by violence without theorizing about who is doing the positioning. In addition, if the world is always already anti-black then it can be difficult to see how any individual debater, judge or coach might be actually participating in anti-blackness, particularly as they engage with each other on the everyday. And, that humanity and civil society is fundamentally anti-black is merely an opportunity to explain why it has always sucked to be Black and not an opportunity to explain that the only way to affirm Blackness is to upend the entire world and at least includes a violent war against white people. Afropessimism is nothing if not an affirmation of blackness. It includes a negation of the world, but it is principally an affirming argument. For Black people. A white afropessimist makes no sense. White afropessimism is just anti-blackness. If you are a white afro-pessimist you should understand that your existence is complicit in violence against Black people and/or that your non-existence is a necessity to Black liberation. Under no circumstances should you understand your role to be to spread the gospel of pessimism further. Your engagement with the argument will always be theoretical (you have no relevant experience), redundant (you can never be additive to this conversation) and objectifying (reducing black people to objects of study). Afropessimism is an argument about why Black people should be the subjects of the debate. It is about how Black people are always already the subject of all debates but excluded from them as such. It is not about white people. All of this assumes that we are taking the argument seriously and not speaking in metaphorical terms, something Eve Tuck warns against in the context of settler colonialism. Both the Settler Colonialism and Black Nihilism arguments rely significantly on Fanon. And Fanon’s main point is that the native/colonialist and/or black/white cannot coexist. In practical terms, this meant that Black liberation in Africa required a violent war to the end. It’s an either/or life or death choice for both sides. But, understanding that anti-black violence is foundational is to understand that you have to fight back in literal terms. To end the world is to end the world. I am not certain that debaters fully understand the implications of such. If the students in my lab understood this they would have found the Black Nihilism argument as difficult as the Settler Colonialism argument. But they did not, partially because they were introduced to the argument from the perspective of Gramsci and a theory of civil society and not from Fanon and everyday anti-Black violence, but also because I didn’t take the time to explain the argument fully. Under no circumstances should non-Black debaters be taught to advocate for afro-pessimism from a non-Black person. And under no circumstances should two white boys think they have a better shot flipping negative and running afropessimism than reading their own Aff (something I had to explain before a quarters debate at the camp tournament). When that happens something has gone wrong.

## AFropessimism

### Linearity Bad

#### Defining blackness within a strict historical grid reinforces object status – this makes politics reactive and disenables the possibility of articulating blackness outside of a binary with whiteness.

Michelle Wright, 2015

Wright is a professor of African American studies at Northwestern University. “The Physics of Blackness”, University of Minnesota Press, pg 116.

When a linear spacetime epistemology begins, as many Black diasporic epistemologies do, with object status—being enslaved, colonized, relocated, and so on—the laws of cause and effect make it difficult to reverse the binary that is set in place, because oppression is asserted as the cause of all historical events (effects) in the timeline, excepting those events that are caused by a Black (resistant) reaction to an oppressor’s action. Yet because it is a reaction to an action, we are again returned to a weird and dismally fixed race-ing of this Black physics, in which whiteness always retains the originary agency and, because origins dominate a linear narrative, white racism is always the central actor in Black lives now condemned to the status of reactors. If, however, we add Epiphenomenal time to our interpellation here, the “now” is foregrounded by agency because Blackness begins as its own interpellation in the moment. At the same time, this moment is nuanced because it involves a potentially endless set of negotiations. Instead of the Black Subject being moved down a line through cause and effect as in a strictly linear interpellation, the Subject in the moment is variously informed by a variety of external and internal stimuli (what is witnessed and what happens; what is thought and felt) that also can intersect with one another. For example, I might watch an episode of a television show in one moment and laugh uproariously at what I find to be a daring but insightful joke about racism; in another moment, watching the same show and hearing the same joke, I might well have forgotten my previous reaction (or remember it, in whatever valence) and find myself ambivalent about or offended by the joke. In other words, I do not move through the world reacting in the same way to the same stimuli all the time—and perhaps this is because the stimuli are never the same because if not the space then the time has shifted (even if I am watching from my same place on the couch, I am doing so on different days). This is both liberating and problematic to our lives, in which intellectual and behavioral consistency is more highly valued than its less predictable performances. It means that one does not always behave as one wishes, and for the Black Subject who seeks to adhere to a Middle Passage interpellation, the clarity of this linear timeline is often belied by the familiar complexity of lived moments. Similarly, the last paragraph of “Everybody’s Protest Novel” asserts agency as an ambivalent possession, but a possession nonetheless: “Our humanity is our burden, our life; we need not battle for it; we need only to do what is infinitely more difficult—that is, accept it.”8

### Not Ontological

#### Anti-blackness is not ontological – the libidinal economy is fluid and the oppression it enacts is contingent.

Peter Hudson 13, Political Studies Department, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg , South Africa, has been on the editorial board of the Africa Perspective: The South African Journal of Sociology and Theoria: A Journal of Political and Social Theory and Transformation, and is a member of the Johannesburg Workshop in Theory and Criticism, The state and the colonial unconscious, Social Dynamics: A journal of African studies, 2013

Thus the self-same/other distinction is necessary for the possibility of identity itself. There always has to exist an outside, which is also inside, to the extent it is designated as the impossibility from which the possibility of the existence of the subject derives its rule (Badiou 2009, 220). But although the excluded place which isn’t excluded insofar as it is necessary for the very possibility of inclusion and identity may be universal (may be considered “ontological”), its content (what fills it) – as well as the mode of this filling and its reproduction – are contingent. In other words, the meaning of the signifier of exclusion is not determined once and for all: the place of the place of exclusion, of death is itself over-determined, i.e. the very framework for deciding the other and the same, exclusion and inclusion, is nowhere engraved in ontological stone but is political and never terminally settled. Put differently, the “curvature of intersubjective space” (Critchley 2007, 61) and thus, the specific modes of the “othering” of “otherness” are nowhere decided in advance (as a certain ontological fatalism might have it) (see Wilderson 2008). The social does not have to be divided into white and black, and the meaning of these signifiers is never necessary – because they are signifiers. To be sure, colonialism institutes an ontological division, in that whites exist in a way barred to blacks – who are not. But this ontological relation is really on the side of the ontic – that is, of all contingently constructed identities, rather than the ontology of the social which refers to the ultimate unfixity, the indeterminacy or lack of the social. In this sense, then, the white man doesn’t exist, the black man doesn’t exist (Fanon 1968, 165); and neither does the colonial symbolic itself, including its most intimate structuring relations – division is constitutive of the social, not the colonial division. “Whiteness” may well be very deeply sediment in modernity itself, but respect for the “ontological difference” (see Heidegger 1962, 26; Watts 2011, 279) shows up its ontological status as ontic. It may be so deeply sedimented that it becomes difficult even to identify the very possibility of the separation of whiteness from the very possibility of order, but from this it does not follow that the “void” of “black being” functions as the ultimate substance, the transcendental signified on which all possible forms of sociality are said to rest. What gets lost here, then, is the specificity of colonialism, of its constitutive axis, its “ontological” differential. A crucial feature of the colonial symbolic is that the real is not screened off by the imaginary in the way it is under capitalism. At the place of the colonised, the symbolic and the imaginary give way because non-identity (the real of the social) is immediately inscribed in the “lived experience” (vécu) of the colonised subject. The colonised is “traversing the fantasy” (Zizek 2006a, 40–60) all the time; the void of the verb “to be” is the very content of his interpellation. The colonised is, in other words, the subject of anxiety for whom the symbolic and the imaginary never work, who is left stranded by his very interpellation.4 “Fixed” into “non-fixity,” he is eternally suspended between “element” and “moment”5 – he is where the colonial symbolic falters in the production of meaning and is thus the point of entry of the real into the texture itself of colonialism. Be this as it may, whiteness and blackness are (sustained by) determinate and contingent practices of signification; the “structuring relation” of colonialism thus itself comprises a knot of significations which, no matter how tight, can always be undone. Anti-colonial – i.e., anti-“white” – modes of struggle are not (just) “psychic” 6 but involve the “reactivation” (or “de-sedimentation”)7 of colonial objectivity itself. No matter how sedimented (or global), colonial objectivity is not ontologically immune to antagonism. Differentiality, as Zizek insists (see Zizek 2012, chapter 11, 771 n48), immanently entails antagonism in that differentiality both makes possible the existence of any identity whatsoever and at the same time – because it is the presence of one object in another – undermines any identity ever being (fully) itself. Each element in a differential relation is the condition of possibility and the condition of impossibility of each other. It is this dimension of antagonism that the Master Signifier covers over transforming its outside (Other) into an element of itself, reducing it to a condition of its possibility.8 All symbolisation produces an ineradicable excess over itself, something it can’t totalise or make sense of, where its production of meaning falters. This is its internal limit point, its real:9 an errant “object” that has no place of its own, isn’t recognised in the categories of the system but is produced by it – its “part of no part” or “object small a.”10 Correlative to this object “a” is the subject “stricto sensu” – i.e., as the empty subject of the signifier without an identity that pins it down.11 That is the subject of antagonism in confrontation with the real of the social, as distinct from “subject” position based on a determinate identity.

### General

#### [Omitted]

## Dulles Wynter

### Link Defense

#### [Omitted]

### General

#### [Omitted]